

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 11-33 are currently pending. Claims 1 and 11-33 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.¹

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1 and 11-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,092,952 to Wilens (hereinafter “the ‘952 patent”) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0008404 to Naito et al. (hereinafter “the ‘404 application”). Further, the Advisory Action maintains the rejections of Claims 1 and 11-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Amended Claim 1 is directed to an information transmission apparatus, comprising:

reception means for receiving a plurality of taste information that represent respective tastes of a plurality of users from a plurality of terminal apparatuses of the plurality of users;

storage means for storing the received plurality of taste information and group information in association with the plurality of users;

search means for receiving an introduction request including search key information from a first user, and searching for a second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored in association with the plurality of users in the storage means;

retrieval means for retrieving at least taste information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user, the retrieved taste information or group information not being associated with the first user; and

transmission means for transmitting the retrieved taste information or group information associated with the second user to a terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user.

¹ See, e.g., Figures 8 and 16 and the discussion related thereto in the originally filed specification.

Regarding the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), the Office Action acknowledges, and it is respectfully submitted, that the '952 patent fails to disclose "that information is only received about a specific user, not associated with another user."² Rather, the Office Action cites the '404 application for such a teaching. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the '952 patent fails to disclose the retrieval means defined in Claim 1.

Further, it is respectfully submitted that the '404 application fails to remedy the deficiencies of the '952 patent, as discussed above. The '404 application is directed to an information presenting device for adjusting information based on the type of information, the behavior of a user, an environmental situation, etc., and presenting the adjusted information to a user and a method thereof.³

The Office Action and Advisory Action apparently assert that the '404 agent 32 that automatically collects information required by a user using a keyword for a user's taste, a rule base, correlation information, etc., teaches "retrieved taste information or group information not being associated with a second user of the at least two taste information."⁴

However, it is respectfully submitted that the '404 application fails to disclose retrieval means for retrieving at least taste information or group information associated with the second user (searched by search means) for introduction to the first user, the retrieved taste information or group information not being associated with the first user. Rather, as cited in the Office Action, the '404 application simply discusses that information that can be automatically received includes information transmitted from a broadcasting station, mail, etc., and information that an agent 32, etc., collects from an information source, such as the internet, a database, etc. Further, as noted above, the '404 agent 32 automatically collects information required by a user using a keyword for a user's taste, a rule base, correlation information, etc. The '404 application does not disclose that the collected information is

² See Office Action dated June 22, 2009, page 3.

³ See '404 application, paragraph [0003].

⁴ See Office Action dated June 22, 2009, page 3; and the Advisory Action dated August 27, 2009.

taste information or group information associated with a second user (searched by search means) for introduction to a first user, as defined in Claim 1.

Thus, no matter how the teachings of the '952 patent and the '404 application are combined, the combination does not teach or suggest the retrieval means of Claim 1.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 1 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably defines over any proper combination of the '952 patent and the '404 application.

Amended Claim 11 recites, *inter alia*,

retrieving taste information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user, the retrieved taste information or group information not being associated with the first user.

Amended Claim 16 recites, *inter alia*,

receiving, by the terminal apparatus, taste information or group information associated with a second user for introduction to the first user, the received taste information or group information not being associated with the first user and being information that the predetermined apparatus that has received the search key information at least transmits to the terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user, after searching for the second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored therein in association with the plurality of users and retrieving the taste information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user.

As noted above, the '952 patent and the '404 application, alone or in proper combination, fail to disclose the retrieval means recited in Claim 1. Thus, the '952 patent fails to disclose the information transmission method and the information reception method recited in Claims 11 and 16, respectively. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 11 and 16 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over any proper combination of the '952 patent and the '404 application.

Amended Claim 21 recites limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claim 1, but in non-means-plus-function format. Moreover, Claim 21 has been amended in a manner

analogous to the amendments to Claim 1. Accordingly, for reasons analogous to the reasons stated above for the patentability of Claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 21 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably defines over any proper combination of the '952 patent and the '404 application.

Amended Claim 26 recites, *inter alia*,

a reception unit configured to receive taste information or group information associated with a second user for introduction to the first user, the received taste information or group information not being associated with the first user and being information that the predetermined apparatus that has received the search key information at least transmits to the terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user, after searching for the second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored therein in association with the plurality of users and retrieving the taste information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user.

Amended Claim 31 recites, *inter alia*,

retrieving at least taste information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user, the retrieved taste information or group information not being associated with the first user.

Amended Claim 32 recites, *inter alia*,

transmission means for transmitting at least taste information or group information associated with the second user, for introduction to the first user, to a terminal apparatus corresponding to the first user, when the reception means receives the search key information from one of the plurality of users, wherein

the transmitted taste information or group information is not associated with the first user.

Amended Claim 33 recites, *inter alia*,

reception means for receiving at least taste information or group information associated with a second user for introduction to the first user, from the server, the taste information or group information being transmitted to the information reception apparatus corresponding to the first user, wherein

the taste information or group information is information that the server that has received the search key information at least transmits to the information reception apparatus corresponding to the first user, after searching for the second user associated with taste information having a resemblance to the search key information from the plurality of taste information stored therein in association with the plurality of users and retrieving the taste information or group information associated with the second user for introduction to the first user, and

the received taste information or group information is not associated with the first user.

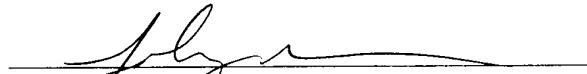
As noted above, the '952 patent and the '404 application, alone or in proper combination, fail to disclose the retrieval means recited in Claim 1. Thus, the '952 patent and the '404 application fail to disclose the terminal apparatus, the computer-readable storage medium, the information transmission apparatus, and the information reception apparatus recited in Claims 26 and 31-33, respectively. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 26 and 31-33 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over any proper combination of the '952 patent and the '404 application.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 11, 16, 21, 26, and 31-33 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over the '952 patent and the '404 application.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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